

WRESTLING FORUM

JANUARY 15, 1989

VOLUME IV

ISSUE 1

A NEW YEAR, A NEW BEGINNING

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MY OWN RESOLUTIONS

Well, the holidays are officially over and things are almost back to normal around here. This is my busiest time of year with trying to juggle overtime at work, the regular bulletin, the yearbook, and oh yeah, the family. Can't forget about them. But since I'm the type of person who would go crazy if I wasn't busy, it feels good (I know... too late to save me now).

To get the business end out of the way, this is Wrestling Forum and we publish twice a month, usually on the 15th and 30th and mail the following day. Rates are \$1.50 per issue and you may subscribe for any amount UP TO six months worth. That would be twelve issues max for a total of \$18.00. We accept any amount between \$1.50 and \$18.00 though. Go ahead and send in the money and we'll figure it out, okay?

Last issue had its problems. Enough so that it made me want to just quit altogether. The copier broke down on New Year's Eve and couldn't be repaired until January 3 since everyone took a long weekend. We ended up paying the Church to use their copier because something about parts taking a while to get here on a slow boat from Japan. As I type this, the copier still isn't repaired so let's just hope we have some way to produce this issue. I guess that means that I have some very important decisions to make about the future of this bulletin. Mary and I talked for a long time and we've decided to continue for the time being. My main source of depression is the fact that everything keeps breaking down and costing a mint to fix. My final decision is to watch the finances very closely here in the first six months of the year and if the bulletin doesn't start turning a decent profit, we will fold it.

Among the things we need to resolve (we as in me and Mary) is to put the bulletin together on time as much as possible. This would help us cope with the dreaded folding, stapling, stamping and banding (we leave the mutilating to the post office) which is the most time consuming and least satisfying part of doing all this. We also need to increase our subscriber base since doing 300 bulletins is not that different from doing 250. We need to get the press up and running again so that the photocopier can take a well deserved rest. That is planned for spring since the press is out in the unheated garage and the ink tends to get kinda thick in zero degree weather.

What can you do? Two things. 1) is to understand if we miss a deadline by a couple of days. We've come to the conclusion that we're only human and that there is a maximum of twenty four hours in any given day. 2) Tell your friends about us. The way to increase our subscriber base is by word of mouth and your mouth is as good as any. We missed our goal of having 350 by the end of 1988, so our new goal is 300 by the end of June. We'll keep you posted on how we're doing.

The yearbook is taking shape and promises to be the best one we've ever done. You'll find the winners of all the categories listed here in this issue, but the complete results can be found in the yearbook. Along with the exhaustive results (including those who received as little as one point in the balloting), you'll find the staff picks for each category along with reader comments to go along with their votes, a funny award section, a trivia game done Jeopardy! style, a complete list of title histories for the year, and a mini biography including real names of wrestlers on about 200-250 wrestlers for what they did during 1988. Cost is \$10.00 which includes 1st class postage. Please make a separate check when ordering the yearbook and send it to YEARBOOK Box 65, Knoxville, IL 61448.

As for now, let's check in with the December Barometer with world traveler, globe trotter extraordinaire, Jeff Siegel...

THE WRESTLING BAROMETER: DECEMBER, 1988

Welcome back to "The Wrestling Barometer", Wrestling Forum's exclusive monthly look at what's hot and what's not in the world of professional wrestling!

The "Barometer" wrapped up 1988 with a rash of "Hot" qualifiers, and only a pair of vote-getters on the downside--both of which come to us thanks to the soon-to-be-forgotten "supertrash III". Does this healthy tip of the scales toward the upside bode well for 1989? Only time--and with the "Barometer"--will tell.

As usual, we begin with a quick review of the procedure that's used for tallying "Barometer" entries: 5 points is awarded for a first place vote, 3 points is awarded for a second place vote, 1 point is awarded for a third place vote, and $\frac{1}{2}$ point is awarded for every item that is included on a voter's list from fourth place on. Then, a minimum point total is arbitrarily decided upon for inclusion in this column. The minimum point total allows us to focus on the month's major trends.

Now, on to the December results:

WHAT'S HOT

(NEEDED TO QUALIFY: 15 POINTS)

1. Dusty removed as NWA booker (41 points)
2. Flair-Luger Starrcade match (36 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)
3. Overall Starrcade show (22 points)
4. Hogan-Savage impending break-up (22 points)
5. Midnight-Midnight feud (18 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)
6. Steiner as NWA TV champ (15 points)

WHAT'S NOT

1. POWW Lingerie Battle Royal (37 points)
2. Lawler/Kerry finish at Supertrash (35 points)

Notes: Viva la Dusty! How fitting that "The Big Ball of Cholesterol" (as Steve Beverly has so aptly dubbed him) has returned to the pages of the "Barometer" with--if you'll pardon the pun--a certain amount of flair. Yes, it was another one of those "negative positives" he's become famous for--that is, earning the top spot on the "Hot" list for something with less-than-triumphant implications, in this case his removal as NWA booker. And if that isn't enough to really get Senor Rhodes' goat, then all he's got to do is gaze down just a tad at the rest of the "Hot" rankings. There he'll find the Flair/Luger Starrcade match and the overall Starrcade show (the first major post-Dream NWA event) finishing a strong two-three right behind him. Poetic justice, you might say.... Similarly along NWA lines, the Midnight-Midnight feud and Rick Steiner's TV title victory also were among December's winners. It's the second month running for the Midnight-Midnight match-up, though I've got to wonder if it really isn't the Cornette-Dangerously feud that's garnering the votes here.... No surprise that the POWW Lingerie Battle Royal earned the top spot on the dark side. I'm hardpressed to come up with a more embarrassing moment for wrestling fans in recent years. Too bad no one tore David McLane's clothes off and tossed the little pervert head first (yes, that one) onto the cement floor....

Some personal notes: Trust me on this one--there is absolutely no trace of professional wrestling to be found in the country of India. For almost three weeks, I looked high and low for the smallest morsel

to feed my habit, if only temporarily. There was nothing to be found- no TV, no live shows, not even any Apter mags (yeah, I really was getting desperate). In fact, a couple of people I spoke to had never even heard of professional wrestling. Just another of the Third World's shortcomings, I guess.

Now, here's the other side of that coin: I returned home to three Observers, two Forums, three Matwatches, two Torches, a Chokehold, a Ringside Reflector, numerous "Barometer" entries, and a handful of holiday cards and notes from friends in the wrestling fan's community. Now that's a weekend's worth of reading that's tough to beat.

The deadline for January "Barometer" ballots is January 25. Because of our scheduling change, there's only about a week or so to get those ballots in this month. Make sure you do, though. We want to get the "Barometer" off to a good start as it enters its third calendar year. As always, entries and related comments should be sent to:

JEFF SIEGEL
P.O. Box 5461
Evanston, IL 60204

1987 YEAR END AWARDS

For the past six weeks we have been tabulating the results from our third annual year end awards balloting. We have finally determined the winners.

Before getting to the winners, the votes were figured a little differently than they are in the barometer. First place votes got three points, second place got two and third place votes received one point. If a voter split his votes with a tie, then half of the point total was awarded each nominee (thus accounting for some of the half points below). Balloting was open to anyone reading the bulletin, subscriber or not.

This year was hardly a record setter. We received just 55 ballots. In 1986 we received 44 (with only about 100 subscribers) and last year we set a record with 94 ballots received. We were a bit disappointed by the number of people who cast ballots as we have more readers than ever before. My sincere thanks to those who took the time to vote and especially to those who practically wrote novels when it came time to justify some of the choices. There was no ballot per se, and all votes were on a "write-in" basis. The smallest ballot this year was done on a 3 x 5 card and the longest was a twelve page thick masterpiece.

here we announce only the winners along with their point totals. The complete results can be found in the Wrestling Forum Yearbook which is on sale now (or at least we're taking orders for it now) and should be published by the second week of February. Details on ordering are on page 2. Let's get on to the categories and their winners.

WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

Ric Flair
382 points

BEST MAJOR EVENT

Clash of Champions I
March 27, 1988
94 points

MAN OF THE YEAR

Ted Turner

39 points

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Scott Steiner

60 points

BEST PROMOTION

World Wrestling Federation

81 points

WORST PROMOTION

American Wrestling Association

73 points

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR

the Midnight Express

Eaton and Lane

120 points

MOST OVERRATED

Dusty Rhodes

62 points

MOST UNDERRATED

Brad Armstrong

25 points

MATCH OF THE YEAR

March 27, 1988

Ric Flair vs Sting

Greensboro, NC

84 points

ANNOUNCER OF THE YEAR

Jim Ross

119½ points

COLOR COMMENTATOR OF THE YEAR

Jesse Ventura

145 points

JOBBER OF THE YEAR

Barry Horowitz

97 points

ANGLE OF THE YEAR

Original Midnight Express attacks
Jim Cornette and his Midnight Express

74 points

FEUD OF THE YEAR

Midnight Express vs Fantastics

73 points

DUMBEST ANGLE OF THE YEAR

Midnight Rider returns

64 points

DUMBEST FEUD OF THE YEAR

Brutus Beefcake vs Ron Bass

47 points

WORST WRESTLER

Ultimate Warrior

62½ points

BEST BABYFACE

Hulk Hogan

Sting

72 points (tie)

BEST HEEL

Ted DiBiase

87 points

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Jim Cornette

137 points

DIPSTICK OF THE YEAR

Dusty Rhodes on General principles

34 points

BEST TV SHOW

WTBS' Clash of Champions Series

68 points

MOST IMPROVED

Sting

64 points

BEST FINISHING MANEUVER

Owen Hart's Moonsault

42 points

WORST FINISHING MANEUVER

Hulk Hogan's Leg Bomb

64 points

BEST INTERVIEW

Jim Cornette

109½ points

MOST DISGUSTING EVENT

Brody's murder

35 points

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

Pro Wrestling Illustrated

91 points

BIGGEST SHOCK

Brody's murder

138 points

WORST ANNOUNCER

Superstar Billy Graham

71 points

PENCIL POINTS

AFTER BOYCOTT

Although I too was disappointed in not seeing any coverage of the UAWF convention in the Apter mags, I hardly think a boycott is in order. Whether you like the content or not of the magazines, Mr. Apter and the rest of the staff put a lot of work into them. The creativity it takes is immeasurable. And besides that, they are good exposure for the not so "in the know" fans.

But I AM curious as to why they didn't cover the convention especially since Jon and a couple of other people were asked by Mr. Apter to write a ppece on it and send it to him. Maybe you could answer this, Jon?

-RON LEMIEUX-

-Vernon CT-

Editor: the piece was written and sent along with a note to use anything from the Forum Convention report as well. Sam Lowe, PWI photographer was there and said he'd send the photos along with some copy. Dave Meltzer published four pages on the convention as well. We provided the information, but as I was told by someone who asked that he not be identified, PWI would not use the material due to the number of fans in attendance being inside fans. Someone (I'm not sure if it was Apter or some promotional office) is afraid of the UAWF exposing the business. Anyone who has read the UAWF Scrapbook knows that we don't. The picture of Conette and the Midnight Express and dangerously and his Midnight Express on one of the Apter covers this month does more to expose the business (especially when they come up with such a phoney-balony excuse like they did on the inside) than the UAWF does.

I agree with you that a boycott is not in order. Letters to Apter and company would work a lot better. One thing that they missed was sending "Matt Brock" to convention to cover it. he and Bruno would have gotten on famously.

-NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST-

SATURDAY NIGHT'S MAIN EVENT

I watched the SNME (1/7) and I will have to say that it was much more entertaining than the NWA that was on earlier. The NWA is just the same old thing any more; their champion has no new routine and he never wins by a clean pin. I suggest that Flair loses the belt to someone for a while and then try to win it back like in the WWF. I never thought the Fed wod be more popular but it certainly has drawn its share of stars.

That Brody tape advertised on PNN was a joke; there are no endings, endless talk (by Tommy Rich?) and poor lip synch.

I watched a tape of the Survivor Series and it was great; there was lots of action, angles, turns etc. These things keep the fans interested. I am very interested in the Hogan Savage angle, but I don't want Savage to lose the belt (but he will).

One last note: what is this slam against the Cubs with "Cub Highlights" (being an oxymoron)? Please, no more cheap shots at Illinois' BEST professional team!

-JIM COOK-

-Mount Auburn, IL-

Editor: Although I've lived here in Illinois all my life (so far) I'm not a Cubs fan. My dad always told me life's too short to be a Cubs fan.

STARRCADE

All in all, Starrcade was enjoyable but it still seems that they could put together a better technical crew at the year's most important event. This was something event he AWA remembered to do.

One thing that impressed me was the fact that Luger was able to go so long without blowing up. He's going to get my vote for the most improved wrestler next year, just based on this one match. Wouldn't it be nice if Luger decided to learn more about the craft of wrestling rather than just depending on his looks? He's going to be the one to carry some promotion into the 90's and beyond.

I did disagree with your grade of Starrcade. I thought it was much more enjoyable than Survivors. That double turn spoiled SS for me. I gave Starrcade an A-.

-ERIC HOYME-

-Indianapolis-

MEMORIES OF THE OLYMPIC

you requested memories of the Olympic. I never attended a card there, but I regularly went to the Arena in San Bernadino and watched the same crew. The Arena is a little adobe hut in the industrial portion of San Bernadino. LaBell brought the boys in every Sunday at 7 pm. Ringside tickets were \$3.00, parking \$1.00. Remember, this was the seventies.

I got a chance to see guys on the way up like Piper, Valentine and Dino Bravo. A also saw the legends John Tolos, Ed Carpentier and JC Dykes and the Infernos.

LaBell constantly brought in people from Japan, Mexico and even England. you could always count on visits from Andre, Mil Mascaras, Fred Blassie and Terry Funk at least once a year. Some of the memories that remain in my mind include:

- Piper in a boxer vs wrestler match with Chavo Guerrero
- Moondog Mayne's last match before his fatal car accident
- Andre carrying five cups of coffe back to the dressing room... in one hand
- A fan leaping into the ring and slugging Crusher Verdu square on the jaw...and Crusher never blinked an eye
- Current AWA jobber Dennis stamp wrestling Piper to a one hour draw
- Tolos defeating Porkchop Cash in a stteel cage-loser leave town match then being chased around the arena by Pampero Firpo
- Andre picking up Bobby Shane so high, his feet broke three lights
- Greg Valentine throwing a young boy's autograph book into the bleachers
- An impressive English giant, Lord Patrick Roach, feuding with Andre (Roach got into acting in England and was the lead heel in "Willow")
- Valentine pulling a "Midnight Rider" and returning as Japanese wrestler "Hiroshima Joe"
- Johnny Rodz appearing as Arab wrestler Java Ruuk

I could go on for pages. I watched all three Guerreros break in (Pop Gory even came out of retirement). I watched guys like Ron Bass, Sir Humperdink and SD Jones receive pushes they'd dream for today. I watched guys that are sadly no longer with us (Bobby Shane, LeRoy Brown and Adrian "Gorgeous Keith Franks" Adonis.

The arena still stands. It's used quite often for TV and movies (Grunt, BodySlam, and Bad Guys) and on occasional independent card.

I remember some of those cards like they were yesterday (some are 15 years past). I wish I could say the same for last month's WWF and NWA cards.

-DAN FARREN-

-Reseda, CA-

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

Probably the biggest news from here is what all happened on the latest edition of Saturday Night's Main Event on NBC, but we'll save those details for a little bit while we cover some interesting notes from the latest set of TV tapings in Florida.

Sorry they're not earthshattering. But we have located some "missing" people. First off, Bill Mulkie returned to do a job for Big Bossman. Randy has popped up from time to time with Crockett, but his brother had not been heard from in some time. The Mulkies were split up right after the 1987 Crockett Cup and Randy had just recently resurfaced. Bill will not be a regular jobber on the Titan circuit, but it's nice to know he's okay and still doing wild bumps. When they introduced Bossman, Bill was in the background of the shot with possibly the most horrified expression I've ever seen on a wrestler.

Second jobber to pop up was Rusty Brooks. Rusty had been a major star in the Global Wrestling Alliance that folded though Global has been claiming that they're just reorganizing things. I guess this pretty well shuts them up. Brooks was on at least twice on the latest set.

I mentioned last time that the final weekend of 1988 was devoted to a year end review show. It was well done with Titan only showing those wrestlers who are still with them. They must have taken lessons in propaganda from the Russians or something. Anyway, there was one MAJOR flaw in the show. When they reviewed the skit for Wrestlemania, they showed the tournament pairings and they ended up showing the ORIGINAL one...the one that would have pitted DiBiase against Randy in the semi finals. As you'll recall, they quietly rearranged the brackets so that these two could meet in the finals.

Now on to Saturday Night's Main Event. It was an important show as it concluded a couple of things and opened up two major angles that will carry Titan into the summer of 1989.

First off, Brutus Beefcake took on Ron Bass in a hair vs hair match that had not been widely publicized until this weekend's syndicated show. I guess they didn't want to let the cat out of the bag too soon coz I don't know of anyone who would think that Bass had a snowball's chance of winning this match and giving the guy with the barber gimmick a hair cut. Anyway, the guys worked hard, probably beyond their own limitations, but it still wasn't a great or even good match. Beefcake took the early offensive and then Bass hit Beefy with a reverse atomic drop half way through to turn the tide in his favor. Bass gave Beefy a pile drive but refused to cover him. Two more finishing moves went by in a row with Bass covering Beefy on the final one. The ref counted a 2 3/4 count before Beefcake kicked/slid out. As Bass argued with the ref over the count, Beefy recovered and ended up with a sleeper on the Cowboy. Titan must have learned from Wrestlemania II to leave the battery operated clippers at home coz they had the electric ones here. They worked fine and Cowboy Ron Bass now looks like Buzz Sawyer. (I knew we hadn't seen him for a while!). Bass then did the obligatory freak out at the hair cut and ran back to the dressing room. The work was decent, the acting was horrid, and the sales job was overdone. I gave the match a D+ as in dreary, dumb, and dull because they at least tried. This feud should have been over before it started though.

Next up was the angle we've all been waiting for. Hogan took on Akeem with Elizabeth at his side and Bossman and Slick at Akeem's side (you fill in your own joke here). Before the match they interviewed Hogan along with Liz and Savage. Savage said he'd watch the bout from a secret place in the back just in case Hogan needed help. When Hogan entered, he spread the ropes for Liz and backstage on camera (which was painfully obvious that it was taped either before or after the match but definitely not during) Mean Gene commented that chivalry was not dead and Randy peered over the top of his sunglasses and mumbled something.

The match began with Hogan beating on everyone in sight including picking up Slick a couple of times and handing him to Akeem and Boassman. Poor Slick worked as hard as anyone. halfway through the match, referee Dave Hebner took one of his patented bumps which allowed several things. It allowed Akeem and Bossman to double on Hogan, it allowed them to show another shot of Randy and Gene with Randy saying Hogan would be okay (Hogan is getting obliterated here), it allowed Liz to run backstage hunting for Randy and it allowed NBC to take a much need commercial break. Liz found Randy but he refused to come to ringside. The ref recovered, and so did Hogan with Akeem missing a splash from the ropes (one of the few shots Titan camera men have ever missed) and do his hulk out routine. Hogan ended up with a bodyslam on Akeem (more like Akeem doing a cartwheel with Hogan helping) and going for the leg bomb.

Bossman from the outside hit Hogan with the nightstick (Hogan had earlier survived four splashes from the wide bodies yet a nightstick to the back did him in...go figure). The ref called for the DQ while the heels doubled up on him again. This time Liz got in the ring and Bossman caught her and slapped the handcuffs on her. Now Randy shows up with a chair and cleans house. She's worried about Hogan while Savage looks like the Savage of old yelling at her. More to come. Match got a D+, the angle got a C+ but the execution of everything got a D-.

Ultimate Dingbat actually worked a match that went more than three minutes. Wow! This was the first time I think I can recall him selling anything and HTM did a nice job of carrying him. The match went back and forth with Dingbat getting hit with the megaphone by HTM after the ref was busy with Jimmy Hart on the apron. It really wasn't that bad of a match considering the participants and the end came when HTM missed two clotheslines and Dingbat hit him with a flying shoulder tackle (the first time I can recall seeing that move from him). It was a clean pin in the middle to pretty well wind up this feud. Are you ready for this? I gave the match a C, which is probably the highest I've ever graded a Warrior match.

Angle number two of the night upcoming. Terry Taylor took on Tito Santana in the best match of the night. They had Bobby Heenan miked at ringside so we could hear what it was like to be a manager. They set things up with an interview with Bobby reiterating how Taylor had limited everything. The match was a series of high spots and carried a good storyline even though it was pretty predicatable. George Steinbrenner (New York Yankees owner) was at ringside and did a short bit with Heenan that got cut (most of it anyway). Half way through, Heenan pulled Taylor outside the ring and pushed him around because he wasn't doing well. That wasn't the break up though. The next time Santana threw Taylor out of the ring though, Heenan picked him up and threw him back in. Taylor went to object and Tito snuck in from behind and rolled him up. Heenan climbed in the ring to chastise Taylor and Taylor blew up and beat him up. Must have been the night for manager bumps. Match and angle both get a B.

Curt Hennig basically squashed Koko B Ware. Not much to comment on other than Hennig has renamed the fisherman suples "the perfectplex." Match got a C+.

The interview then came with the Mega Powers and it had me on he floor. Randy claimed that he felt every pain that Hogan felt and named just about every part of Hogan's body that they had attacked while Hogan winced at being reminded of it. Liz was important in the background without saying a word. Usually she has either a look of fear or one of gushy happiness when these two are on together. This time it was one of disgust. Subtle, but apparent.

There's lots of rumors floating as to how the rest of the Savage-Hogan breakup is going to occur. The strongest one is that both guys will be turned to tweener roles instead of one definite babyface and one definite heel. In this senario, Bobby Heenan will approach Hogan to be his manager bu be turned down (in somewhat the same way Hogan turned down being bought by Ted DiBiase). If this is the way they handle things, it will certainly be interesting.

The last set of TV tapings have already been done (air dates 1/21, 1/28 and 2/4). They are already pushing one of the matches for 1/21 so it will air after what ever happens tomorrow at the Rumble. Anyway, Randy Savage is to wrestle Akeem in a non title match (Slick was on hyping the match and said that Akeem will be on his way to being the first "BLACK" world's champion. Am I missing something here?

The match takes place but halfway through, Bossman attacks Randy with the night stick. Liz runs back to get Hogan and he comes out immediately, grabs Randy's title belt and cleans house with it. Randy comes to in time to see Hogan with the title belt in hand and gives Hogan some real dirty looks. Like the little girl in the movie says (almost) It's Cooooomingggggg!

There's another skit where Andre has been hypnotized and so he's not afraid of snakes anymore. Right.

I think if I were Terry Taylor, I'd be looking for another job. After this great angle they set him up with and after all the time they spent with him beating up Bobby Heenan, guess who he gets to feud with. Steve Lombardi. Nope. that's not a mis print. During the tapings, Taylor gets to reenact the angle where he beats up Heenan only this time Steve Lombardi comes out to make the save. they're going to call Lombardi the Brooklyn Bomber or Brawler or Braintrust or something equally as ridiculous. I figured that Taylor was in for a pretty decent push and then hey go and "demote" him while pushing Lombardi. Dumb. Of course it ain't bad for a guy with limited speed, limited ability, limited strength and limited other job offers.

Test time. Only this time no one has to pee in a bottle. This one is to test the crowd reactions. They are pitting Randy Savage against Ultimate Warrior in a few select cities to see how the fans greet Savage against one of the top babyfaces. this should tell them how he would do against Hogan ahead of time since Hogan should get more cheers than Warrior. If Warrior gets booed in the test cities, they may have to rethink the angles leading up to Wrestlemania.

speaking of Wrestlemania, they may have moved the date. I checked with my local cable company to see what shows they are going to be carrying and the gave me a date of April 2 for "some wrestling thing from the WWF." That didn't make any sense since WMV had been announced for 3/19 but they don't have anything scheduled for that day and neither does the NWA. I'm told by someone in the NWA that this may have been designed to make Crockett show his hand for what he was going to do to counter Wrestlemania this year, but then again that's just one guy's speculation.

The February 3 show live on NBC will eminate from Milwaukee with a main event of Hogan and Savage vs Akeem and Bossman with probably Dingbat vs Valentine for the IC title. Either that or we'll see Demolition against POP. Hard to say right now.

Here's an interesting tidbit...Titan is going full steam at promoting a card in Chicago just three days before the NWA PPV card there. They're going to bring in EVERYBODY on FridayFebruary 17 in an attempt to burn the city out wrestling wise. This may not work as the Horizon usually sells out anyway and shouldn't effect the NWA's card any more than usual. I've been told that the main event on the card will feature the first Savage-Hogan bout (they are going to keep this a secret from the rest of the country and pretend that the one at WMV is the first, ignoring all the other matches they had when Savage was a heel), but this is too early to tell for sure. The point is, they want to have a hot card so that they can sell as many tickets as possible and try to draw some of the business away from the other side of town 3 nights later.

Okay, here are the results from the Royal Rumble starting with the main event (because of space limitations): We'll list the order of entry with the eliminations where they occurred with the name of the eliminator in parenthesis. First was Axe who started off against partner Smash (interesting pair up and a good start). Andre came in followed by Hennig. Smash eliminated (by Andre). garvin in. Valentine in. Garvin out (by Andre). Jake in, Bass in, Jake out (by Bass). Shawn Michaels in, Axe out (by Hennig). Butch miller in, Andre out when Jake came back to the ring with Damion. Andre eliminated himself. HTM in, Tito in, Bad News in, HTM out (by ?). Janetty in, Bass out (by both Rockers). Savage in, Arn in, Valentine out (Savage). Shawn out (Randy & Arn). Tully in, Marty out (Tully). Hogan in, Hennig out (hogan). Tito out (?), Luke Williams in, Butch Miller out (bad News). Koko in and out (Hogan), Luke out (Hogan), Warlord in and out in a second (Hogan) Tully and Arn out (by hogan while Warlord was still walking to ring). Savage and Badnews out (by Hogan...film at 11). Bossman in, Akkem in, Hulk out (by Boss and Akeem). Brutus in, Bossman out (Hogan pulled top rope down as Bossman rebounded off). Taylor in, Barbarian in (match was an A to this point but got extremely boring here), Studd in, Hercules in, Martel in, DiBiase [30th man] in. Taylor out (Ted). Hercules & Brutus out (Ted & Barbie), Barbie out (Martel), Martel out (Akeem). This left Studd, DiBiase and Akeem. DiBiase instructed Akeem how to wrestle Studd, but Studd threw akeem over the top. Ted tried to buy off Studd but Studd manhandled him and threw him over. Virgil came in and tried to beat up Studd, but Studd didn't sell a thing and threw him out as well.

FILM AT 11 DEPT...Hogan eliminated both Savage and Bad News at once when he went to help Randy who was struggling with Brown. Savage immediately slid back in the ring and went face to face with Hogan with a lot of finger pointing and slapping of the finger being pointed (huh?). Liz hit the ring and soothed things over and Hogan and Savage ended up shaking hands and hugging. Hogan was the only one left in the ring having eliminated everyone until the next two minute period, allowing them to stage this little mini drama.

I gave the match a B. I liked it until the point I mentioned earlier. The beginning with Axe and Smash was especially good. The booker for this haas to be almost a genius to keep track of this.

In other bouts, Haku beat Harley in the battle of the kings. harley took some crazy bumps , someone continued on page 23

"BAD BOY RICKI LAWLESS": THE ETERNAL FAN

Wrestling is theater--the perpetually overstated battle of good and evil. For Jim Leon, it became--and eventually ended--his life.

Jim didn't like reality and usually managed to avoid it (except for that final bullet in the chest that he couldn't argue with or deny). Jim was like a fourteen-year-old wanting to buy the dream--money, glamour women--and trying to live it, although after nine years in the business, he knew the truth; he worked his last show hundreds of miles from home to an audience of 80. He had left a wife and a daughter for wrestling and segued from lover to lover, as maintaining the identity of "wrestler" was more important than any other person, or paying the bills.

Jim (as a man in his late 20's) showed amazing enthusiasm over wrestling magazines and fanzines. He would eagerly page through the glossies, trying to sound like everyone was his best friend. An avid self-promoter, he would write fan letters about the "Heavy Metal Connection", signed with girlish names and accompanied by a more-or-less flattering photo. He'd been a contributor to Norman Kietzer for years. ("Medardo Leon" was a big fan of "Ricki Lawless" and the "Heavy Metal Connection" and always contributed results from North American Championship Wrestling, whose headquarters was Jim's home address.) And checking newstands daily for an early 1988 "interview" with photo spread in "Wrestling Eye", he was like a kid trying to make Christmas come faster.

He'd offer to fight for possession of a Meltzer newsletter. The day he discovered "Wrestling Forum" he'd been lying in bed chanting a litany of "oh, my head (eyes, back, knee, ulcer....) hurts" and wondering whether or not he was developing a hernia. Then he opened my mail and shut up for a little while, and finally shouted, "Hey this is great stuff".

Jim tried to identify with other, more popular wrestlers. He'd boast, "Someone told me I looked just like Mike Kahlua". Or, I've got tights just like Rick Rude's" (note: of the pre-airbrush days) and offer to unpack his dirty laundry to prove it.

Jim Leon was a painfully shy person. But usually the babbling, boasting "Ricki Lawless" persona took over--courtesy of cocaine. Co-workers had nicknamed him "Leon, the Liar". This was a Jim who would be living on pasta and butter, without enough cash in his pockets to go beer drinking at the neighborhood bar, and calling cross-country to boast of his three cars, his jewelry, his real estate, and his designer clothes and furniture (whose brand names seemed to correspond to whatever was most common on Baltimore billboards).

He was constantly recreating his personal history from the new and from TV shows--talking of being a mercenary in Afghanistan, knowing no details of location, and afraid of crowds and foreign menus; talking of working for the border patrol in Laredo, Texas, not remembering what town was on the opposite side of the border.

"Ricki Lawless" was self-destructing. Rarely could he sleep for more than an hour at a time. He was constantly fatigued. Exhibiting depressive behavior, he would at times stay in bed for days; the neighbors thought he was out of town. At summer's end, he was a nightmare image--fish-belly white, no body tone except for beer bloat, black bags inches wide beneath his eyes, a boil-like pustule under one; eye-balls dull and discolored. And sometimes he wasn't lying any longer: he was blacking out, capable of holding a conversation and having absolutely no memory of it hours later.

Sometimes he still spoke of plans for the future, quitting wrestling to become a movie star, or a bouncer, or a drug dealer.

Jim was worried about ever turning thirty. He felt it would be tragic. He missed it by six months.

Jim was happiest as "legend in his own mind" and when performing. He could be dead on his feet and moaning, and would step before a crowd and become charismatic, visibly lighting up, his eyes flashing, his

face reflecting and intensifying all the crowd reaction. And then, when the performance was over and the heat was gone, he'd be a zombie again. It could get grotesque: parents pushing small children forward for autographs, young boys visibly overcome for the moment by hero worship--toward a wreck of a man who looked like 25 going on dead.

No one can save someone who won't save himself. Jim did what he wanted to do. And made some stupid choices. And got unlucky.

It's sad that Jim was too shy and too dumb to like himself. He couldn't imagine being loved, other than as a wrestler (although loving a wrestler for being a wrestler is like loving a traveling salesman for the number of miles he has traveled). He'll remain more memorable for what he was in those rare moments when he stepped out of character:

- an unusual wit, a very funny man
- a shy, passionate, sweet-talking, sexy young Hispanic with flashing eyes, talking sweet nonsense
- the physically vain man with unusual values, sprawled across the bath tub, shaving his testicles, because "body hair is so gross and ugly"
- drooling over a fake Rolex displayed by a sidewalk vendor in Chinatown
- eating his way across the refrigerator, an hour after dining out, entering the second coffee cake and insisting on only drinking Diet Pepsi, since he was in a "diet", after gaining thirty pounds the previous month on the "Ricki Lawless Beer and Basement Steriod body-building diet"
- the charming contradictions; afraid to touch in public, nervous kissing goodbye in a train station or holding hands in a darkened movie theatre--and a fireball in private.

Jim was probably sot for cause. He wasn't a "nice" person. He thought he had to be "too lazy to work". He owed money. He had lots more expenses than income. He usually only told the truth by accident. He was the consummate performer....and too inconsistent to be a good hustler.

On November 30, someone shot a scoundrel. And killed a "lost boy" of wrestling, who never grew up, who never left the dream world of the glamour, the money, the adulation.....

POSTSCRIPT

Jim Leon is now Catholic in death, if not in life, in a still unmarked grave. (I assume the relatives will add a stone when the ground sets). He remains the "Bad Boy" wrestler, black sheep, outcast. He is buried among strangers, not in a family plot. Almost every other grave in the Cemetery was decorated by flowers or wreaths for the holiday season. In spite of how recently he died and in spite of having relatives who live and work in the nearby area, Jim's grave was bare.

Silk roses certainly are expensive.

Editor's note

I have withheld the name of the author of this piece due to the sensitive nature. I have a feeling there is a lot more to this story than meets the eye.

A few issues ago we ran a story on how an unknown wrestler lived for a week working for the WWF. Though he never worked for the WWF, I thought we should give equal time to Jim Leon and how he died.

For those of you in the Baltimore area, he is buried in the Gate of Heaven Cemetery, section 10, lot 1153 next to a Thomas McGarry.

WRESTLING FORUM MASTERS

by Sean Grande

Here is a quick review of how the Wrestling Forum Masters Tournament works: The top two finishers in the regular Wrestling Forum Tournament (Ric Flair and Ted DiBise) have been "excused" from competing. The rest of the top finishers have been divided up into four divisions. The first two months will feature inter-divisional competition round robin style with the winner of each division advancing to the finals. The next four wrestlers with the best inter-divisional records will also advance on the "wild card." Finals will be held in the second two month period. Here are the results of the first round with standings:

RED DIVISION

Bobby Eaton 12 Stan Hansen 12
Bobby Eaton 15 Jerry Lawler 9
Stan Hansen 12 Hulk Hogan 11
Bret Hart 17 Jerry Lawler 7
Bret Hart 18 Hulk Hogan 6

GREEN DIVISION

Randy Savage 17 Eddie Gilbert 7
Randy Savage 15 Sting 9
Tatsumi Fujinami 15 Eddie Gilbert 8
Tatsumi Fujinami 12 Terry Taylor 12
Terry Taylor 13 Sting 11

ORANGE DIVISION

Owen Hart 14 RW Hawk 10
Owen Hart 21 Pat Tanaka 3
Arn Anderson 12 Akira Maeda 11
Akira Maeda 12 Pat Tanaka 12
Arn Anderson 15 RW Hawk 9

BLUE DIVISION

Barry Windham 19 RW Animal 5
Riki Choshu 13 Barry Windham 11
Terry Gordy 20 Tully Blanchard 7
RW Animal 17 Tully Blanchard 7
Terry Gordy 12 Riki Choshu 12

STANDINGS

(W-wins L-losses T-tie VF-Votes For VA-Votes Against)

RED DIVISION

	W	L	T	VF	VA
B. Hart	2	0	0	35	13
B. Eaton	1	0	1	27	21
S. Hansen	1	0	1	24	23
H. Hogan	0	2	0	17	30
J. Lawler	0	2	0	16	32

GREEN DIVISION

	W	L	T	VF	VA
R. Savage	2	0	0	32	16
T. Fujinami	1	0	1	27	20
T. Taylor	1	0	1	25	23
Sting	0	2	0	20	28
E. Gilbert	0	2	0	15	32

ORANGE DIV.

	W	L	T	VF	VA
O. Hart	2	0	0	35	13
A. Anderson	2	0	0	27	20
A. Maeda	0	1	1	23	24
P. Tanaka	0	1	1	15	33
RW Hawk	0	2	0	19	29

BLUE DIVISION

	W	L	T	VF	VA
T. Gordy	1	0	1	32	16
Riki Choshu	1	0	1	25	23
B. Windham	1	1	0	30	18
RW Animal	1	1	0	22	26
T. Blanchard	0	2	0	11	37

second round matches

VOTE ON THESE!

RED DIVISION

Eaton vs hogan
Eaton vs Hart
Lawler vs Hogan
Lawler vs Hansen
Hart vs Hansen

GREEN DIVISION

Savage vs Fujinami
Savage vs Taylor
Gilbert vs Taylor
Gilbert vs Sting
Sting vs Fujinami

ORANGE DIVISION

Hart vs Maeda
Hart vs Anderson
Hawk vs maeda
Hawk vs Tanaka
Tanaka vs Anderson

BLUE DIVISION

Windham vs Gordy
Windham vs Blanchard
Animal vs Choshu
Animal vs Gordy
Choshu vs Blanchard

DEADLINE

IS
FEBRUARY 11, 1989

ALL VOTES SHOULD BE SENT TO:

SEAN GRANDE
700 Commonwealth Ave
Box 701-C
Boston MA 02215

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION/MEMPHIS/WORLD CLASS

I wonder if they know something we don't or if we know something they don't. I got a press release from the AWA that lists the top ten challengers for the various titles. First of all, Ken Patera is ranked number 8 for Jerry Lawler's AWA World Belt. Then, quite conspicuous by his absence is Kerry Von Erich. Kerry is no where to be found on the entire press release. I thought at first we might be seeing a break up of the AWA-World Class relations but the Samoan Swat Team is ranked at number 6. Hmmm.

January 20, the AWA will run its first big show of the year and the site is Milwaukee at the Mecca Auditorium. The show will feature Jerry Lawler defending against Don "The Rock" Muraco (yes, they used the Titan trademarked ROCK in the press release along with the fact that he is the former WWF IC titleholder). Also on the card will be Badd Company vs the Guererro, DeBeers vs Slaughter, and a cage match with McDaniel and Fernandez. If anyone attends, please let me know with a report, please. This will be a ESPN taping.

Well, no sooner had I typed this part and all Hell broke loose. It seems that the wrestlers who appeared on Superclash III didn't get paid what they were promised. Granted, the gate of just over \$25,000 didn't leave much of a profit, but Verne insisted on taking his cut first. This has Jerry Jarrett VERY upset as well as his wrestlers. Memphis and World Class have vowed not to ever work with Gagne again. This presents a special problem as Jerry Lawler is still in possession of the AWA belt. Kinda.

Verne demanded that Jerry drop the strap to Muraco on the TV taping. Jerry refused until he gets his money promised him from Superclash. In fact, he made a suggestion to Verne that would have been physically and anatomically impossible when Verne demanded the title back. As things sit at this moment, Lawler has taken his spite out on Verne by dropping the AWA championship at a house show on the Memphis circuit to Dutch Mantell. This puts Verne in a tough way and we'll probably see an office change of the title, something like we saw when Nick Bockwinkel got the title from Stan Hansen.

I talked with a couple of fans as well as a couple of the wrestlers who are "involved" in the AWA and everyone's consensus seems to be that this will be the last AWA TV taping. Part of the reason stems from Verne's anxiousness to get the revenues from the PPV of Superclash. He's been calling Danny Wolfe of FNN (who handled the PPV arrangements) literally everyday, wanting his money. Wolfe keeps telling him that the money is automatically held up for 60 days following the event (which is standard procedure), but Verne keeps calling anyway. One person went as far to say they expect Verne to "take the money and run." As of this point, I have no reason to believe that would be true. At any rate, the next couple or three weeks in the AWA will be interesting.

Meanwhile, in some Memphis news, attendance at the Mid South due in part to a shooting that resulted in the death of one of the fans in attendance. For quite sometime, people have commented to me about the "bad neighborhood" that the Coliseum is in, however, when we were there for convention I saw the place in the daylight for a little bit and it didn't look bad, and that night when Michelle & Dore DeQuattro, Jeff Siegel, Mary Kelly and I got lost getting there, we spent quite a bit of time driving around the neighborhood after dark and believe me, it's no worse than the UIC Pavilion in Chicago. But some of the regulars have been scared off by the violence and thus attendance is hurting.

Phil Hickerson has returned to Memphis following a Japan tour and is hilarious. He's now going by the name of P. Y. Chung Hi having been converted to Budiism while there. He returned with a shaved head, Road Warrior paint and his adopted son, Down Town Bruno Chung Hi. You gotta see this to believe it.

Frankie the Thumper has also come in to be the newest member of the Studd's Stable. Seems like that group has a revolving door policy just like the promotion itself.

There's a new Japanese tag team on the scene managed by Tojo. I was told their names but can't remember except that it sounds like something you'd read on an eye chart.

In World Class, Steve Cox had just begun to renew his feud with Gary Young when he up and quit. Other departures include Kendo Nagasaki and Super Black Ninja who will both reportedly go to work for Nelson Royal's Mid Atlantic group. Kamala has left and so has the bostwani Beast and no word on where they'll pop up again.

With all the departures, there seems to be few left to do anything with. The Samoan Swat Team is still hot, but they too have been on the rumor circuit of going bye bye.

Cactus Jack Foley changed his last name to Manson (I guess they want us to notice a slight resemblance to convicted murderer Charles Manson) and took the light heavyweight title from Eric Embry. Don't let the name of the title fool you. They raised the maximum weight qualification to the point where the only wrestlers who wouldn't qualify are ones like Akeem and Bossman. This led to an angle where former champ Eric Embry (who I believe has the book right now) quit wrestling only to come back after everyone thought he was gone to attack Skandor Akbar. I'm told the angle didn't come off real well as there was not enough time in between his quitting and coming back.

I've watched a few of the Legends of World Class shows on ESPN during the last couple of weeks and I'm really surprised at how good those shows from Dallas once were. I never got to see their shows back then (circa 1983-84) because Central Illinois was a wrestling wasteland and we didn't know about tape trading back then. But watching the angles they set up with Ric Flair and a very good Kerry Von Erich made me realize just how far the promotion allowed itself to slip. I shouldn't say they allowed themselves to slip as they had lots of help from the NWA and the WWF on their trip down the ladder of success. But still, the angles were hot and the loyal fans created possibly the most sustained heat for matches that I've ever heard. It's too bad that the whole complexion of wrestling changed so much in 1984. Often times we don't know what we've got till its gone.

Back to Memphis, Jerry Lawler is wearing a new world's title belt. I guess Jerry Jarrett had one made especially for him. Lawler said on an interview that he had sent the respective AWA and WCCW world belts back to the promotions for them to do with what they want. This is probably the first step in the break up of the alliance as Gagne should now have his old belt that he can give to anyone he wants. Top candidates will be Don Muraco and Greg Gagne and we'll almost definitely see an office title change. Neither is a particularly good choice but Muraco is heads and shoulders and for that matter feet and knees above Reggie, but Reggie has always wanted a world title belt and this may be a belated Christmas present from dear old dad. Ugg. Looks like next issue we'll probably be back to separating reports again.

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

Things are hot here. There's been more movement of personnel and planning in the past two weeks than in the whole of 1988.

First, Eddie Gilbert replaces Jim Crockett as head booker. This move has been speculated on since Gilbert arrived on October but the actual transition comes as a bit of a surprise. Gilbert held the position with Bill Watts' UWF when Crockett bought that promotion. Most recently, Gilbert booked for Continental before leaving there in September of last year. Gilbert's booking style may resemble that of Watts' as the cowboy is the one who trained Eddie in the art of booking. If history repeats itself (and in wrestling, it usually does) we'll see Eddie giving himself a push (no doubt as a heel) and a lot of angles that seemingly come out of nowhere. Some of the booking will still be done "by committee" as I understand it. This means that anyone will be able to suggest an angle (whole or part) and if Gilbert thinks it can or would work, he'll go with it. I look for good things to come out of all this as long as Eddie keeps his ego in check and doesn't push himself down other throats like Dusty did. Eddie had that problem in Continental, but then again, on a small circuit like that, he had little choice. Here in the NWA, he's got a lot of talent to work with.

But he's getting more. Rick Steamboat has signed what is called "a long term contract" with Ted Turner and the NWA. He has yet to appear for a TV taping, but has already taped some promos for the upcoming PPV show on February 20. His debut is supposed to take place in late January. From what I hear, he'll be under a hood teaming with Rick Steiner and he'll pin Flair in a televised tag match before removing the mask. Flair was instrumental in getting Steamboat to sign as they are good friends outside the ring.

We'll be seeing even more new faces in the coming weeks as well. Cowboy Bob Orton and Butch Reed are reported to be headed in to fill the roles of the missing horsemen. Talk about stubborn! They've almost made the fans forget about the horsemen and now they revive the idea again. Geez. Anyway, as for the choices, they could literally be called horsemen, or cowboys coz Butch Reed has been working in the rodeo during his absence from the ring and Barry played the cowboy role when he first started. Now all they have to do is turn Flair, add Dusty and...oh never mind. This is getting too silly.

Back to Orton and Reed...both were top 20 workers up until just a couple years ago but then both slipped dramatically. Reed's decline can be traced back to when Vince made him bleach his hair. Orton on the other hand; has flat gotten lazy! He occasionally would have a good match in the WWF, but they were far and few between. Part of his problem may stem from his fondness for distilled spirits. The value of these two will depend directly upon their attitudes they bring with them.

Add to this list of names that of Genchiro Tenryu. He is the Road Warriors' choice to fill the spot on the six man tag team left vacant by Dusty Rhodes. One has to wonder if this means there will be future talent exchanges between the NWA & Baba's All Japan.

Although nothing has been confirmed as of yet, I do know some of the plans for the 2/20 PPV card in Chicago. I should say, I know what they want. Right now they are negotiating with Terry Gordy and things look good. Gordy would be reunited with Michael Hayes to go against the Road Warriors. Gordy had pretty much agreed to come in but had second thoughts and as of this writing, there's less than a 25% chance he'll come in. If they can't get him, it looks like the Roadies will go against the Varsity Club on the PPV show since in Chicago they'll be cheered anyway.

One of the other matches we'll almost definitely see on the PPV show will be the final battle between the Midnight Expresses. I understand plans are such that the name will be at stake as well as the loser of the fall having to leave town. My guess (though no one has told me for sure) would be that Randy Rose will be saying fond farewells on February 20. While we were at convention in Memphis, Paul E brought up at the press conference that if he ever had to choose a new name for a tag team, he'd call them the Sadistics. I have no idea why. I would suspect that if what I've just told you is true (about the loser leaving and name dropping) that we may see this team. As for a new partner for Condrey (or Rose), the name of Brian Pillman is being thrown about quite liberally.

It looks like we're going to be seeing a bunch of pinfalls in the NWA from now on. I just received a report from Baltimore (see results section for full results) and a couple of surprises. First, Al Perez and Larry Zbyszko pinned the Texas Broncos with Dustin doing the job. Also, Flair pinned Sting, but used his feet on the ropes to do so.

Funny story also comes out of Baltimore. Let me quote from Fred Naarisma's report:

New form of advertising was unveiled today. In the past, between bouts, Gary Capetta usually stands in the ring with nothing to do (awaiting the combatants for the next match). However, on six different occasions today, he plugged Hardee's for 30-60 seconds (reading from a prepared "statement"). Capetta and Hardee's were booed lustily every time. It was funny. Even capetta was laughing during the 5th and 6th commercials. The 5th plug started out "Fans, have you tried the chicken sticks from Hardee's yet???" ----BOOOOOOOO!!! capetta cracked up. Before the 6th plug, Capetta was speaking of the next NWA show (February 23, tickets onsale now, etc). During this, a few fans started chanting "We Want Hardee's." Sure enough, the February 23 plug was followed by another commercial. BOOOOOO!!!!

He also reports that there was more Hardee's advertising during the Stampede as three wrestlers (Rose, Zbyszko and one other) wore Hardee's tee shirts into the ring.

There is a plot afloat to get me to the PPV card in Chicago. It doesn't look good. There are four things that have to go exactly right for me to make it up for the show and the chances for those all falling into place are pretty slim. First, my car has to be running right. Sean can tell you all about that. Second, the weather and roads have to be good. Chicago is a long way to be stranded from home. Third, Mary has to have had the kid by then, preferably with her still in the hospital. Fourth, my boss has to agree to let me work the day shift that day instead of the usual 3pm-11pm. In other words, I'd sure like to, but....

WTBS has changed the time of the Saturday evening show to one hour later (7:05 pm eastern time). The first installment of the show featured a year end review of the NWA. Unlike the WWF who ignored anyone who had left the promotion before the end of the year, the NWA acknowledged Tully and Arn, even though it showed them losing.

This weekend's show (1-14) has yet to air, but we may be seeing another turn. Larry Lovell phoned in results from the 1-13 card in Hillsville, VA (again, see results section for complete results) but Kendall Windham played the role of the complete heel tonight in a bout with Eddie Gilbert. He had been originally scheduled to team with Dustin to go against Larry Zbyszko and Al Perez, but Curtis Thompson ended up being Dustin's partner and Kendall went against Eddie. Kendall attacked Eddie before the bell. Well see what tomorrow night's show brings.

Well, nothing on Kendall, but everything is coming together. The TBS show from this weekend is one of those that will be put on video tape for a long time to come.

It started with Eddie Gilbert in a rematch with Barry Windham. Another great match with these two with Eddie doing the thing where Barry just can put him down. He keeps getting up. The end of the match saw Ric Flair do a run in and attack Eddie (causing a DQ on Barry) and they left him for dead. Later on the show during an interview with JJ and the Horsemen, Eddie comes out and challenges them to a match again. This time, he'll have an unnamed partner (I got it wrong when I said it was going to be Steiner and a mystery partner, it's Gilbert). The challenge was for next week (1/21) and that too should be a hot show. I'm still being informed that Steamboat will have a mask, but you never know. JJ, Flair and Barry went down the entire list of NWA babyfaces as to who Eddie could have as a partner and decided (as long as it wasn't Luger) that whoever he came up with would be fine. They were taking it as a joke, then Flair stepped out of character just a bit to say that he admired Eddie for coming out and issuing the challenge after what they had done to him and that they had to take seriously whoever he had as a partner. This could be good. This could be great. It could be a dud. We'll know next week.

then later in the show, Rick Steiner defended his newly won TV title against Mike Rotundo. They had another good match (hopefully this trend will continue) that featured lots of good action and some good comedy as well. The end came when Doc and Sullivan interfered causing a DQ. They gave Steiner a stuff piledriver and then tried to reenact one of the all time worst skits-dumb ideas in the history of mankind. They kidnapped (dogknapped) Steiner's pet dog. Or at least they tried. They were stopped short by Junk Yard Dog and Michael Hayes. This would have been pretty good in my book if it hadn't been for the stupid kidnapping scheme.

Sit down. This may shock you. I enjoyed JYD tonight. He was out during an interview with Hayes and did some "background chatter" that was at least watchable.

I like Missy Hyatt. I think she's very good at being a valet and playing the heel role. But as an interviewer, she needs some help. Her questions aren't fluid and her giggly style comes across bad. Either they need to drop the spot with her interviewing wrestlers or they need to redo it so she doesn't come off so much as an airhead. After meeting her at convention, I know she's not (at least not as much as she comes across on Tv as being).

With all the new names coming to town, you can expect a lot more people than ever to start doing jobs. Clean in the middle jobs. The reason is that with so many to push, someone has to and after a wrestler does a job, they will be able to somewhat hide him till people forget. The Turner people really want to convey the fact to fans that any wrestler can beat another on any given night. Truthfully, it would be a lot more fun to not know exactly how things were going to turn out all the time. Knowing is kind of like knowing what's in your Christmas package before you open it.

Finally, there has been talk (and talk only upto this point) of turning Dusty Rhodes heel. I don't have any particulars mainly because no one else does either other than pure speculation. They want to do it by Bash time though. Big question though, is, will Dusty remain with the NWA? His contract runs out at the end of January and they are going to want him to take a major league pay cut because of him not booking anymore. Rumors continue to fly all over the place.

PULSE ON PORTLAND

by Greg Anderon

It's funny how things work. Last issue I was short on news but this time I have a ton of stuff to cover. Top Gun beat Grappler to win the Northwest title (place and date unknown) in a cage match. Also, Buddy Rose is still around but now wears a mask to cover his shaved head.

On 12/31 in Portland, Scott Peterson and Steve Doll beat Matt Borne and Abudda Dein in a no DQ bout when Peterson pinned Dein. The Southern Rockers then issued a challenge to Grappler on an interview to meet him and Dein for the tag belts the following week. Grap refused and the Rockers vowed to talk to Don Owen to force the match.

Later, as Grap and Dein were being interviewed, promoter Barry Owen came out and announced that it had been over thirty days since the heels had defended the titles and then he took them away. He then announced that the two teams would meet for the titles on 1/7. As Barry walked off, Grap stole one of the belts back and the Dein tried to take it from him and they had a tug-o-war over it. They finally left the TV booth clutching opposite ends of the belt! Don't get ahead of me now!

The show ended in a unique way. Art Barr was being interviewed and he held a little girl who he said was his biggest fan. He kissed her and then put her down. At this point, Grap, Borne, Dein and Carl Styles came up and Art picked the girl up again until a security guard could grab her and return her to her family. The heels had a bottle of what was probably sparking cider and began dumping it all over Art (they almost drowned him)! Grap intimated that Barr would not be around long in 1989. Suddenly ALL the faces showed up with bubbly of their own and showered the heels who fled. Then they sprayed announcer Don Koss, who yelled "HAPPY NEW YEAR!" as the show signed off.

The bout for the vacant tag straps on the 7th was a 2 of 3 falls affair. Before the match started (the ref had not showed up yet) the four men began brawling and Grap ended up giving Peterson a shoulder breaker on the floor and then rammed the shoulder into the ringpost, incapacitating Scott. Doll wanted to continue the match alone and did well for a while but was finally pinned by Dein after a clothesline. With Doll in trouble, Peterson came back out with his arm and shoulder in a sling and finally tagged in. He cleaned house on the heels with one arm, but finally hurt his bad shoulder after dropkicking Grappler. When Grap ran the shoulder into the post again, the heels were DQ'd in the 2nd fall for unnecessary roughness.

The fun began in the deciding fall. Doll came out alone again, but Peterson finally returned. With all four men in the ring, Dein stomped away at Scott's "injured" shoulder as Grap worked Doll over. At this point RODDY PIPER took a seat at ringside, armed with a bag of popcorn and soda pop! this distracted Grap who was dropkicked out of the ring by Doll. Steve went out and atomic dropped Grappler. Dein reached out and tried to pull Doll back in the ring by the hair. Piper stood up and got Dein's attention by tossing his popcorn in the air. When Dein looked up, Piper tossed his drink into the Arab's face. Dein fell back, Peterson rolled him into a reverse cradle and got the pinfall winning the belts for the Southern Rockers. The heat was tremendous! After the match, Roddy talked Barry Owen into putting the Rockers in against the Russian Assassins on the 1/12 combined card with the NWA taking the place of JYD and Ivan Koloff.

Killer Carl Styles has a \$500 arm wrestling challenge open to any and all wrestlers and he was talking about this on an interview when Grappler came out and said he had something more important to talk about, namely the loss of the tag belts and Piper's role in it. Styles broke in and Grap told him to shut up and gave Syles a shove. Styles broke in one more time and Grap slapped him! Styles said he was sorry and backed off. Grappler then said he was tired of Abuddah Dein not following orders and he was replacing him on the team with Piper's past number one nemesis Buddy Rose. Barry Owen then showed up and said he would put Grap and Rose in against the Dog and Koloff. Grap said he was so confident that they could beat them that he would put up his house, pickup and even his mask to prove it. Owen said he would take him up on his offer to put up the hood and Grap tried to deny saying it, claiming he only offered his truck. Owen said his mask would be on the line and Art Barr would referee the bout. Grappler was beside himself!

The 1/14 card will have top Gun putting up both his titles against Abudda Dein where one belt (probably the TV title) would be on the line for the 1st 15 minutes and the other for the rest of the time limit. During his interview hyping the match, Dein said Top Gun and the Grappler were both a couple of two faced Americans! Also on the 14th, Styles would have his first arm wrestling challenge and they hinted that Piper may put in another appearance.

In the Pacific Coast group, Rip Oliver and tiger Chung Lee met on the 7th to decide the new PWWC title. We will have the results next time. Anyway, Lee attacked Oliver during Rip's match against CoCo Samoa on the 1/1 card. Newcomer Kenny Tiki Conn from Hawaii debuted in one of the most boring matches I've ever seen as he pinned Riot Maker. The bout was all rest holds (rest? I thought they were in a coma) and promoter Mel Saraceno's sleepy TV commentary did little to pep it up. He needs a charisma transplant!

RESULTS FROM ALL OVER

12/26 HERSHEY, PA (WWF) - courtesy of Carl Nitz...Blazer pinned Conq #1...Davis over Poffo...Garvin drew Valentine...Lombardi beat Powers...Dingbat over HTM in cage...Brainbusters over Rockers...Taylor downed Koko...Duggan beat Bravo...NOTES: Attendance 5000...No high spots in Blazer match save the finish...rest of bouts pretty good with Garvin-Valentine being an old fashioned slap fest...Carl called that one his choice for match of the year based on how real it looked...even Davis-Poffo was excellent.

12/27 WASHINGTON DC (NWA) - courtesy of Bill Hanrahan...Fulton drew Zbyszko (C)...Broncos over Commandoes (C)...Luger/Bigelow beat Abby/Barry (B)...Steiner drew Flair (A)...Sting/Dusty won by DQ over Roadies (C+)...Luger won the Stampede (B)...NOTES: Attendance: 3000...best card at DC Cap center in a long time...Steiner Flair match was the best Bill has ever seen live (lot of that going around)...Warriors and Sting all cheered but Dusty was booed...Bigelow pinned Abdullah CLEAN in tag match...

12/28 LINCOLN NE (WWF) - courtesy of Bruce Grummert...Houston pinned Conq #2...Robin beat Judy Martin...Akeem pinned Hillbilly...POP DDQ Demo...DiBiase over Hercules...Haku pinned Race...Savage defeated Bad News...NOTES: Att: 6,194 (700 short of sell out...longest match (Hillbilly-Akeem) went 12½ minutes...Haku beat Race clean in 5:00.

12/30 ST LOUIS (NWA) - courtesy of Harry "Tacky" White...Rose drew Fulton...Broncos beat Commandoes...Murdoch pinned Assassin #1...Abby/Windham pinned Luger/Bigelow...Sting/Dusty beat Animal/Zbyszko...Flair over Steiner...JYD won bunkhouse...NOTES: Att: 4600...Flair's pin was clean in middle...Dusty pinned Larry Z in tag match...Abby got to pin Bigelow tonight after plastic knifing him...

12/31 HARTFORD, CT (WWF) - courtesy of Ron LeMieux (grades a composite of Dan Reilly, Ted Dibiase and Louis Fortuna)...Taylor pinned Blazer (B-)...Rude over hillbilly (D)...Bushwhackers beat Bolsheviks (D+)...Valentine pinned Garvin (B-)...Duggan defeated Bravo (D)...POP over Demo via COR (C)...Hennig downed Koko (B)...Savage pinned Bad News (B-)...NOTES: Attendance 6700...Savage back on track workwise tonight...garvin and Valentine another slap fest with Garvin getting pinned from behind when he took Greg's shin guard off.

1/7 BALTIMORE (NWA) - courtesy of Fred Naarisma...Perez/Zbyszko pinned Broncos...JYD over Assassin #1...Original ME pinned Fantastics...Jim Cornette won manager's battle royal...barry over Gilbert by DQ...Luger/Dusty/Steiner beat Warriors/Ellering...Flair pinned Sting...Animal won Bunkhouse...NOTES: Attendance 5000...11 total two counts in Flair-Sting...Flair had feet on ropes...Bunkhouse came down to Steiner & Animal...Steiner hit him with Belly to belly, Animal got up, staggered to ropes and Steiner tried to shoulder block him over top...Animal ducked and backdropped Steiner over.

1/13 HILLSVILLE VA (NWA) - courtesy of Larry Lovell...Larry Z/Brad Anderson over Dustin/Thompson...Heidi/Misty beat LeRoux/Dallas...Simmons over Commando Boone...Gilbert pinned Kendall...Rotudo/Doc downed Steve Casey/Fulton...ME over OME...NOTES: sellout at 1100...no shows Perez, Rogers...managers great at ringside.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

As always we'll take care of the trivia question before getting on to any official miscellaneous stuff. Last issue we wanted to know what AWA jobber was always introduced as "The very capable _____". The answer of course is Kenny "Sodbuster" Jay. This issue's question should be relatively simple as well. Who was Paul Christie's valet/manager during the early-mid seventies. Answer next time and as always, there is no prize for a correct answer, this is just for fun. By the way, if you have any questions you'd like to throw out, send them along as we can always use them for next year's trivia contest at the UAWF convention.

Speaking of the UAWF, the final edition of the Scrapbook for 1988 is just about finished. For an update, those who have not yet renewed their membership will still receive this issue but if your membership expires on 1/1/89, then your membership will expire two weeks from receipt of the fourth issue. Steve Sims is the new editor of the scrapbook (I think I've mentioned that before) as editing it along with this bulletin and working and having a family was just too much. I'll still continue to oversee the UAWF, but the magazine had to be passed on to someone who could handle it.

Congratulations go out to Terry Taylor and his wife on the birth of their son Cody and also to Chris Adams and his wife on the birth of their son Chris Jr. Mary had her first "false labour" pains this week so we're getting close as well. All this may be just another advertising ruse as Titan is coming out with (are you ready for this?) official WWF disposable diapers. Now Ultimate Warrior won't be the only thing about Titan and the WWF that smells. And if think my new kid is going to be caught wearing those ridiculous things, think again Buster!

I have been searching the local video stores for the movie "Body Slam" which is supposedly out on tape. I know some PPV stations are carrying it now as a pay movie. If anyone has a copy, contact me and we'll work something out. I know it's supposed to be bad, but it's my bound duty to tell you all just HOW bad it is. Our video stores claim it doesn't exist.

Progress on the yearbook is going nicely, but i'm a few days behind the schedule I'd lined out for myself. Looks like it'll be ready to go now by February 6th and get mailed about a week later. It usually takes the bindery about a week to put the spiral binding in place. As of the 14th, we have about 25 of the 120 (planned) pages done. I'll keep you updated on the progress.

RON LEMIEUX is offering copies of his Arena report for sale. He publishes an Arena Report after each show he attends and it goes for just 50¢ a copy. It's the same report he sends to newsletter editors that we take our reports from and that won him the UAWF Correspondent of the Year Award. Mail 50¢ for each report you'd like (he comes out with approximately two a month) to Ron at 305 Vernon Ave #187, Vernon, CT 06066.

The lawyers for Jose gonzalez have managed to get yet another continuance in his murder trial. New date is January 24. They are having a tough time getting witnesses for the prosecution and are going to rely on second hand testimony given to doctors who worked on Brody. These doctors were supposedly given statements by Brody and by other wrestlers and the court has allowed that they may testify. Gonzales is pleading self defense at the present and I have been told that if he is convicted of manslaughter (the charge now that key witnesses refuse to testify) they will appeal the decision based on the "hearsay testimony" of the doctors. Meanwhile, Gonzalez remains free on bond.

continued from WWF report

who had major surgery just a few months ago. Grade B- mainly for Harley's work. Haku won with a superkick.

The posedown was predictable as Rude attacked Dingbat right after the final pose. DUMB.

Robin beat Judy Martin. Sherri was there to challenge the winner. Robin won when she faked a cross body block and Martin ducked. Robin then cross body blocked her when she stood up. C-.

The did a thing filming the numbers pick by the wrestlers. No one actually announced their number and the balls in the cage that they pocked from never seemed to diminish. DiBiase obviously wasn't satisfied with his pick and called Slick in to discuss "some business" with him. This whole thing was done to fill time and it served its purpose.

In the opener, the Hart Foundation and Jim Duggan beat the rougeaus and Dino Bravo in 2 Of 3 falls. The heels won the first fall with 1e Bomb Rougeau on bret. Second fall came when Duggan pinned raymond. The end came when Bret went tot he top rope to come off on Bravo. Jacques pushed him off. Neidhart came in and went after Jacques. Bret then went for a rolling reverse on Bravo but Bravo hung on to the ropes. When he turned around o go after Bret,, Duggan hit him with the 2 x 4 while the ref was still trying to get Neidhart out of the ring. Bret covered Bravo for the three count and the win. Match gets a B-. Good except when Bravo and Duggan were in. Bret was finally good (he hasn't been very good against the Rougeaus for some reason).

Sorry for having to continue the report. As you know, our copier doesn't reduce type and this is being typed late Sunday. We got everything done except this report and the bulletin should go out first thing Tuesday (post office is closed tomorrow).

One final note...try to have all yeabook orders in by February 3. That is the tentative day to print and bind. We will only be printing up what has been ordered and they will not be available after the intial press run. They are too expensive for us to have on hand unsold.

We'll see you next time. Send in comments on the Rumble as I'm anxious to see if anyone else enjoyed it as much as I did. See ya in two weeks. Bye!

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